



Men Who Sustain Partner Violence and Seek Help: Their Abuse and Help- Seeking Experiences and Implications for Prevention

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Background: Male Victims of Partner Violence

- Best population-based studies show that 25%-50% of all PV victims in a given year are men.
- Existence of male victims has been source of much controversy.



Background: Consequences of Controversy

- We do not know much about men who sustain PV.
- Qualitative accounts show that men who sustain PV:
 - May be ashamed to come forward
 - May not be believed
 - May be accused of being a batterer when they do come forward



Purpose of Present Study

- Provide empirical descriptive data on men who sustain PV and seek help
 1. Who are these men?
 2. What abusive behaviors occur in their relationships and how frequently?
 3. What are the possible consequences of being in such a relationship for the men?
 4. Why don't they just leave?
 5. What help-seeking efforts have they engaged in?
 6. What responses did they get when seeking help?



Sample

- Criteria:
 - Heterosexual men
 - Ages 18-59
 - In a relationship lasting at least one month in the previous year
 - Physically assaulted by female partner within previous year
 - Sought outside assistance or support
 - Lived in the U.S.
- N = 229



Survey

- If eligible, men referred to Internet survey
 - Demographics
 - Conflict Tactics Scales
 - PTSD Checklist
 - Closed-ended and open-ended questions on:
 - Last physical argument
 - Why man has not left
 - Help-seeking efforts

Q1. Who are these men?

Age & Income ($n = 229$)

	Mean	SD
Male Helpseekers's Age	40.23 years	9.01
Female Partner's Age	38.00 years	8.74
Male Helpseeker's Approximate Income	\$48.4K	\$29K
Female Partner's Approximate Income	\$25.7K	\$27K



Q1. Who are these men?

Race/Ethnicity (n = 229)

	Male Helpseeker	Female Partner
White	85.2%	69.4%
African American	6.1%	7.9%
Hispanic	5.2%	8.7%
Asian American	4.8%	11.8%
Native American	1.7%	3.1%



Q1. Who are these men?

Education (n = 229)

	Male Helpseeker
% with 2-year degree or more	62.9%
% with graduate degree	14.0%



Q1. Who are these men?

Employment (n = 229)

	Male Helpseeker
% Unemployed	8.7%
% on Disability	6.6%
% not working	3.1%
% Disabled	12.6%

Q1. Who are these men?

Type of Employment (n = 64)

	Male Helpseeker
Computers/ IT	31.3%
Construction/ Manual Labor	23.4%
Doctor/ Scientist/ Attorney	15.6%
Law Enforcement/ Firefighter	14.1%
Business owner or executive/ CEO	14.1%
Engineer	12.5%
Military	7.8%



Q1. Who are these men? *Relationship Characteristics*

	Mean	SD
Relationship Length	95.89 months (7.99 years)	81.04
Time Since Relationship Ended ($n = 87$)	6.65 months	8.44

% of relationships with minor children: 73.5% ($n = 166$)



Q1. Who are these men?

Relationship Characteristics

Relationship Status	Percent
Married	48.0%
Separated	14.4%
Ex-dating	7.0%
Ex-cohabiting	7.0%
Divorced	6.6%
Cohabiting	5.2%
Ex-engaged	4.8%
Dating	4.4%
Engaged	2.2%

Q1. Who are these men?

Childhood History

	Percent
Experienced Child Physical Abuse	47.8%
Witnessed Interparental Domestic Violence	20.5%
Experienced Nonfamilial Child Sexual Abuse	17.9%
Experienced Familial Child Sexual Abuse	13.5%

Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Aggression

	% of Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% of Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Minor Psychological Aggression	100.0	95.6
Name-Calling	75.5	25.8
Isolation/Monitoring	87.8	32.8
Severe Psychological Aggression	94.3	40.2
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	41.0	14.0

Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Aggression

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor Psychological	65.65 (229)	25.01	26.49 (219)	22.57
Name-Calling	19.61 (173)	16.37	4.64 (59)	6.09
Isolation/ Monitoring	27.32 (201)	19.83	4.87 (75)	5.98
Severe Psychological	31.84 (216)	30.20	5.36 (92)	8.07
Insisting on Sexual Intercourse	9.71 (94)	8.83	4.72 (32)	6.14

Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Psychological Abuse

Partner falsely accused helpseeker of hitting or beating her	69.0%
Partner filed restraining order against helpseeker under false pretenses	37.6%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of physically abusing children	34.5%
Partner falsely accused helpseeker of sexually abusing children	11.8%



Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Aggression

	% of Female Partners Who Perpetrated	% of Male Helpseekers Who Perpetrated
Minor	99.6	53.7
Severe	92.1	19.7
Very Severe	54.6	7.0
Any	100.0	54.1

Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Aggression

	Female Partners: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year		Male Helpseekers: Mean # of Acts Used in Previous Year	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor	33.93 (228)	35.63	6.52 (123)	13.22
Severe	17.09 (211)	23.21	5.01 (45)	6.62
Very Severe	7.63 (125)	11.28	2.90 (16)	4.10
Any	49.53 (229)	56.07	8.29 (124)	16.01



Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument

- *“I am in the middle of it right now and have contacted a national abuse hotline via email. I have never hit my wife, but today I came close to doing this. It should be noted she has hit me more times than I can remember and kicked me. I grabbed her arms in self defense and held her to the floor. I am a very big and strong man, my wife is tall but thin, not strong at all. I know I will be the one who goes to jail even though she is the one hitting and kicking.”*
- *“I went to sleep. She said she was calling police. I said fine. She did. They arrested me with no proof or evidence of me doing anything....They dropped charges but not before a 6 month restraining order on me which destroyed my family and business, all based on her false allegations.”*



Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

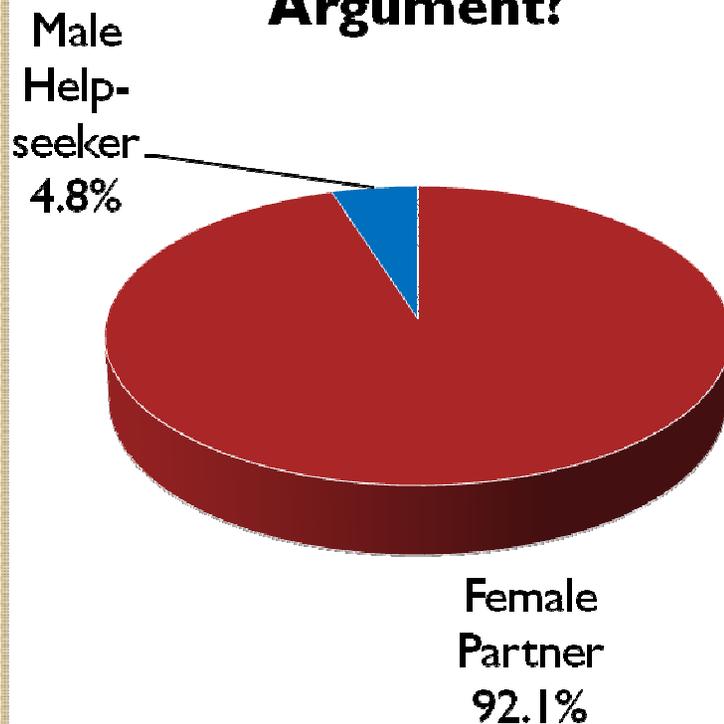
Description of Last Physical Argument

- *“Grabbed her to stop her from assaulting me again. Asked her to stop. She called the police. (I think she was sleep deprived also - and very angry and aggressive and was not thinking clearly.). I spent 7 days in jail for stopping her throwing things in my face. Lost all faith in the legal system for men.”*
- *“I had been holding the baby during the argument, when she threw the TV remote control towards my head just missing the baby. The control is still missing the battery cover due to impact. I treated my facial, chest, arm scratches with ointment.. got stressed, cried at night as I've often done.”*

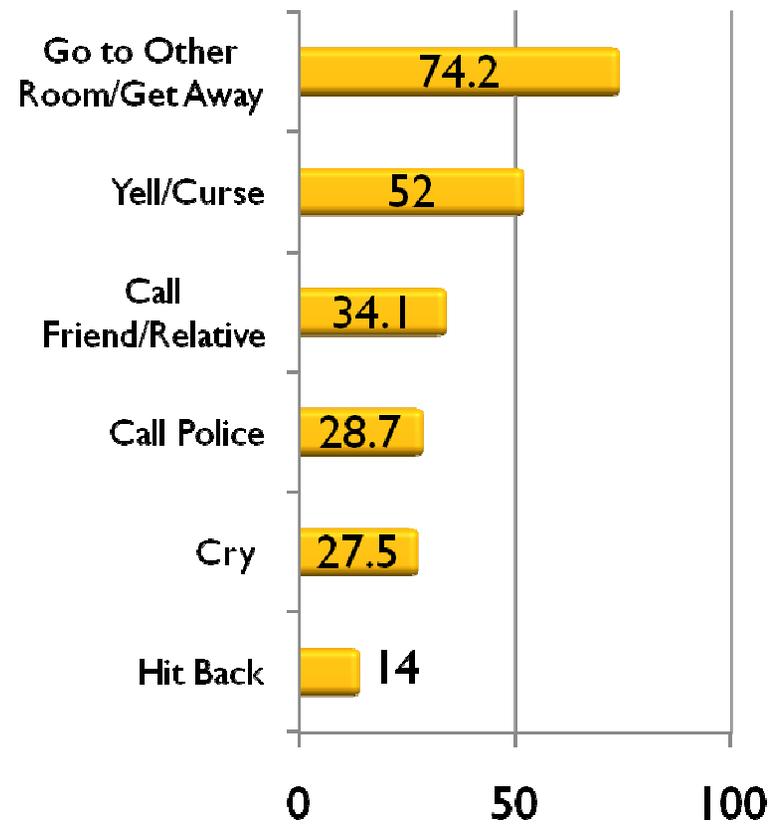
Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument

Who Was the First to Use Physical Aggression in Last Physical Argument?



What did the Male Partner Do As a Result?



Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument:

Examples of Other Responses

- **Restrain/Self-Defense/Struggle:**
 - *After she hit me, I wrestled her to the floor, and tried to restrain her without hurting her. She bit me.*
 - *Defended myself by grabbing her arms then pushed her back away (she was kicking). Called police after she tried to run me over 4 times with her car. Police never came. Had 2 witnesses to event.*
- **Take it:**
 - *entered fetal position, waited for her to stop*
 - *just stood there and took it*
- **Get others involved:**
 - *Had her son (my stepson) call 911 and report she was assaulting me*
 - *I called her mom*
- **Try to reason with her:**
 - *I tell her that it is not acceptable for her to hit me, or yell at me, especially in front of the children. I also ask her to apologize.*
 - *I would try to talk to her to calm her down and let her know that I love her and wanted to work things out, but she would escalate and keep making false accusations, accuse me of cheating on her, saying no you don't love me*



Q2: Types & Frequency of Aggressive Behaviors

Description of Last Physical Argument:

Examples of Other Responses

- Leave house:
 - *I go and stay at my father's house until she is better.*
 - *I ran out , locked myself in the car, drove to the woods and slept in my car.*
- Failed attempts to leave
 - *I tried to leave and she hit me in the head with a flower pot, then took the phone from me to prevent me from calling anyone.*
 - *I yelled at her to stay away from me and I attempted to leave my house but she took my car keys from me and said I would have to take them from her to get them back.*
 - *She refused to give me my cell phone and car keys and wouldn't let me leave the house. When I took the car keys from her she called the cops and I was arrested and convicted.*

Q3: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Injuries

	% of Females Who Were Injured	% of Males Who Were Injured
Minor	24.9	76.4
Severe	6.1	37.1
Any	25.8	77.7

Q3: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

Physical Injuries

	Mean # of Female Injuries		Mean # of Male Injuries	
	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M (n)</i>	<i>SD</i>
Minor	5.19 (57)	6.98	9.68 (175)	12.92
Severe	3.50 (14)	4.07	4.66 (85)	7.85
Any	5.85 (59)	7.12	11.74 (178)	16.02

Q3: Consequences of Aggressive Behaviors

PTSD

	Mean (SD)
Total PCL Score	46.92 (14.59)
Re-Experiencing	14.81 (5.35)
Avoidance/Numbness	17.51 (6.04)
Hyperarousal	14.60 (5.02)

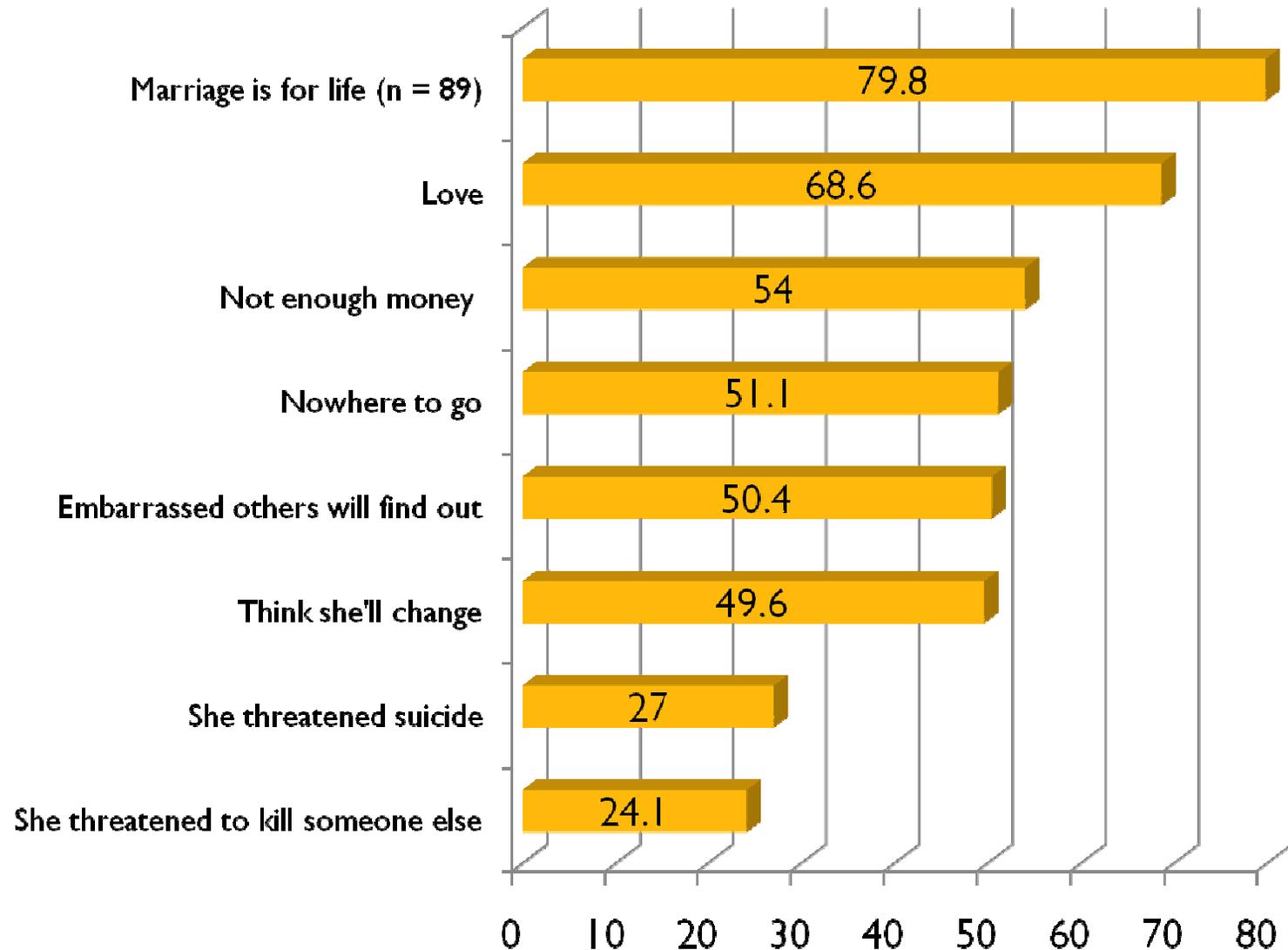
- % Scoring Above Clinical Cut-Off for PTSD: 59%



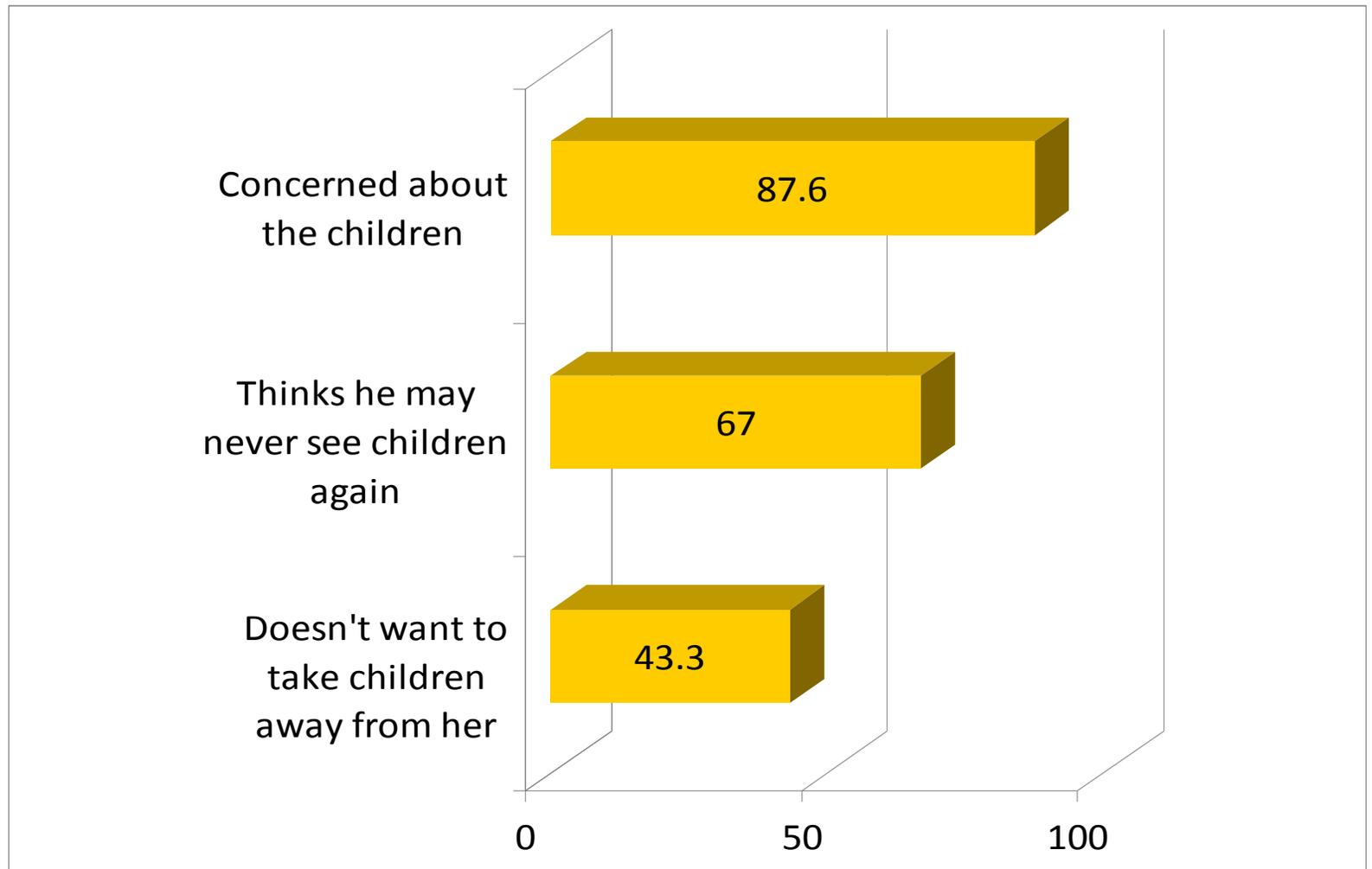
Q4: Why Not Leave Her?

- 94.5% of men who are still with their partners (137 out of 145) have seriously considered leaving, but haven't yet.
- Why not?

Q4: Why Not Leave Her?



Q4: Why Not Leave Her? Men with Children (n = 97)



Q4: Why Not Leave Her?

- Possible financial repercussions
 - *I end up going back when she informs me that she's "taking everything" that I have worked thirty years of my life for, built the home that we live in with my own hands - to end up with nothing.*
- She threatened with false accusations
 - *Partner has threatened to fabricate allegations against me to ruin my career and deny me visitation, and make my life miserable forever, and I believe it.*
 - *She has and still tells me if I ever leave she will tell everyone I abused her, get the children, the house and all money and that no one will believe me if I say she hit me. From experience she is right - police didn't believe she hit me when I called them and the lawyer I talked to told me the chances of me getting custody of the children were none. I have no choice but to stay or I will end up on the streets and never see my children again*
- Didn't think he was being abused/ it's normal
 - *All info/news, insight, explanations said it was/is perfectly normal and expected that a woman can hit (abuse) a man (just look at commercials). I thought for most of my life that her aggressive behavior was normal and acceptable.*



Q4: Why Not Leave Her?

- Feels it's morally wrong to leave her
 - *I don't believe in giving up on the people I love.*
- He's dependent upon her in some way
 - *I depend on her health insurance*
 - *I'm a damn illegal immigrant with nowhere else to go.*
- Fears for safety of loved ones or pets
 - *When our son and daughter were growing up and at home my wife was violent toward both of them - I stayed hoping that I could protect them, ultimately I couldn't.*
 - *I am afraid that if I leave her, and she gets involved with another man, [it] would expose my children to a damaging environment with the added negative factor of a man who may not be as patient and controlled as I am and who may not exercise restraint in front of my children.*
 - *I stay around to protect the children!*



Qs 1-4: Implications for Prevention

- Current guiding prevention model:
Patriarchy theory
 - Current study challenges this model
 - Does the current prevention model impact the men's behavior?
 - Don't leave because of the children
 - Don't leave because she threatens false accusations that could ruin his financial, professional, and/or personal life
 - Don't leave because of embarrassment



Qs 1-4: Implications for Prevention

- How should prevention models be changed to address this issue?
 - Reconsider using a uni-causal model
 - Patriarchy may be one model through which we understand IPV, but other models are needed.
 - Ecological model.

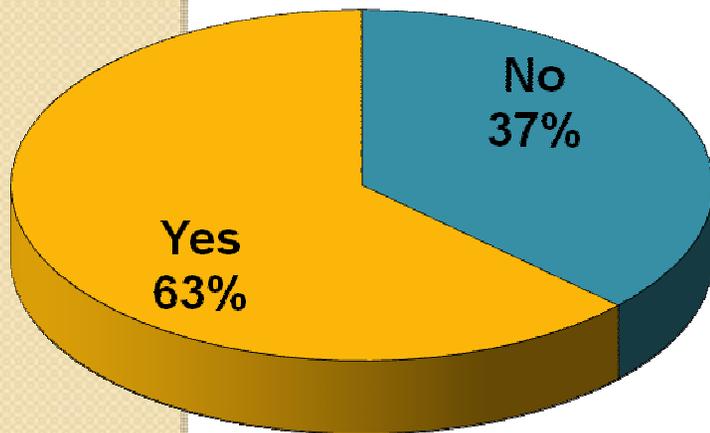


Qs 5&6: Helpseeking Behaviors

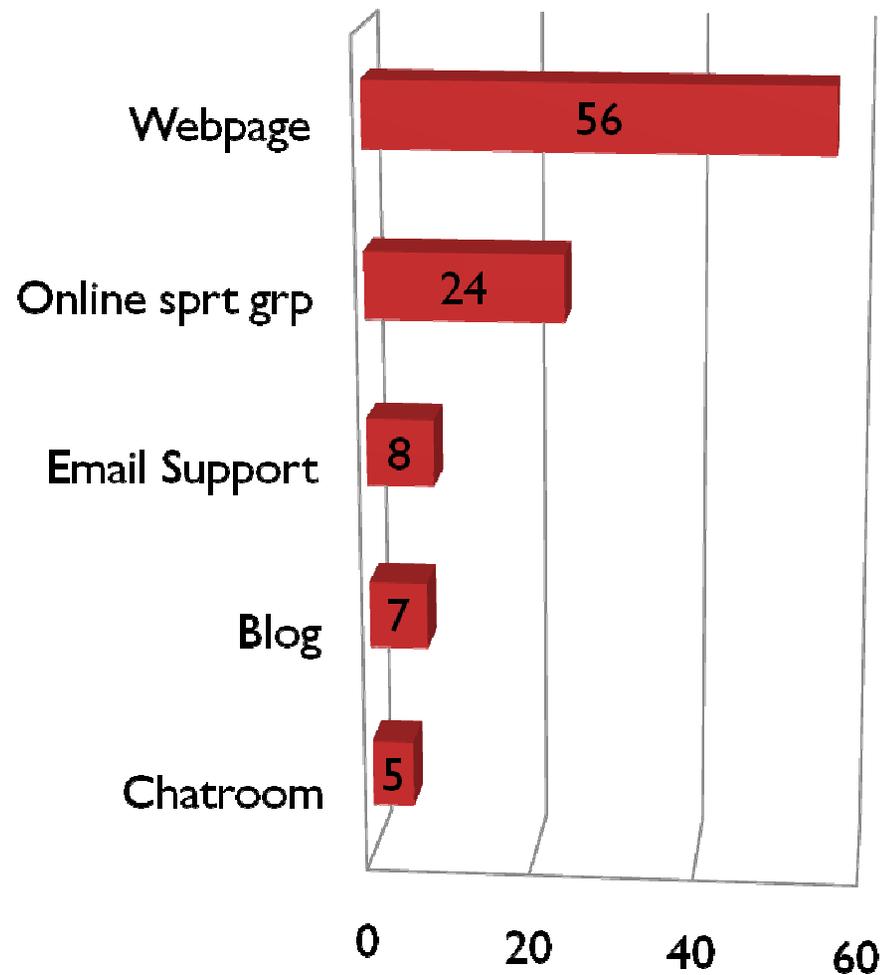
- We asked the men about different resources they have used to seek help, including:
 - Online resources
 - DV hotlines
 - DV agencies
 - Police
 - Medical providers
 - MH providers
 - Informal types of helpseeking

Qs 5&6: Online Helpseeking

Ever Seek Help Over the Internet?

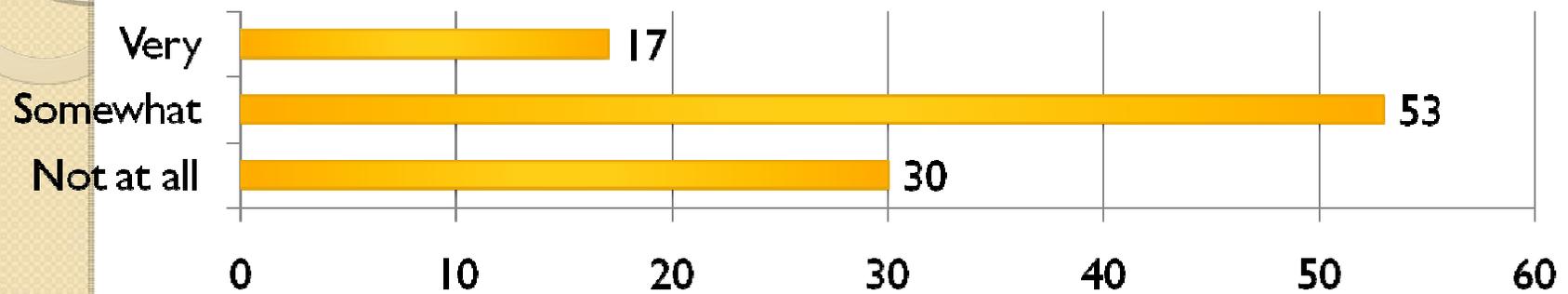


Type of Support Used

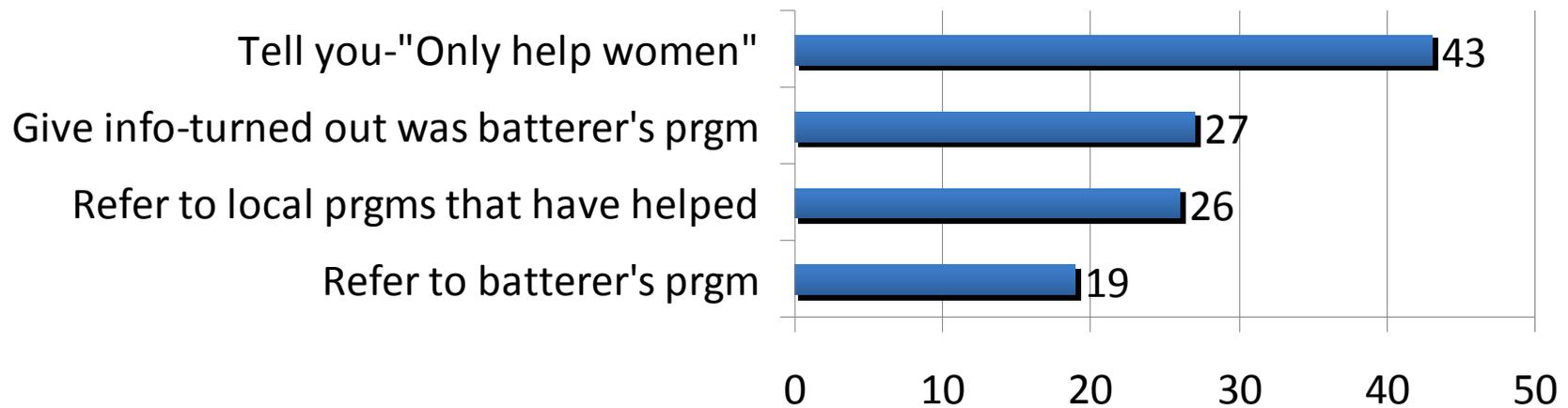


Qs 5&6: Online Helpseeking

Helpfulness of Online Resource



Experiences with Online Resource



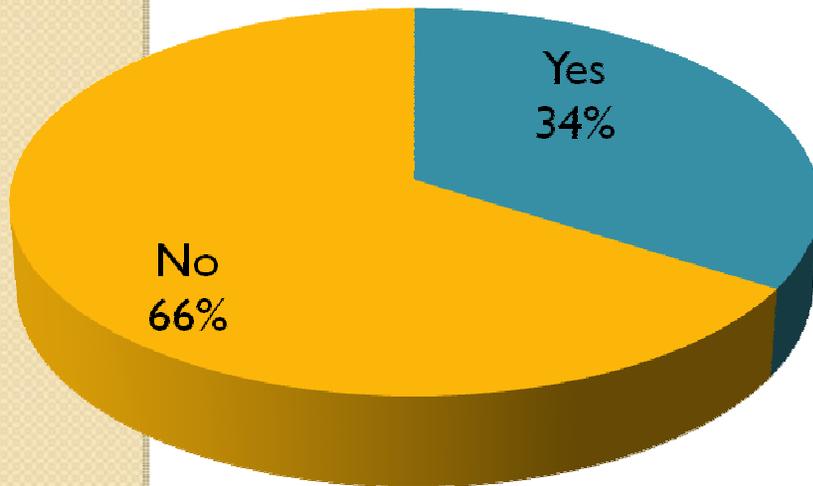


Qs 5&6: Individual Experiences with Online Resources

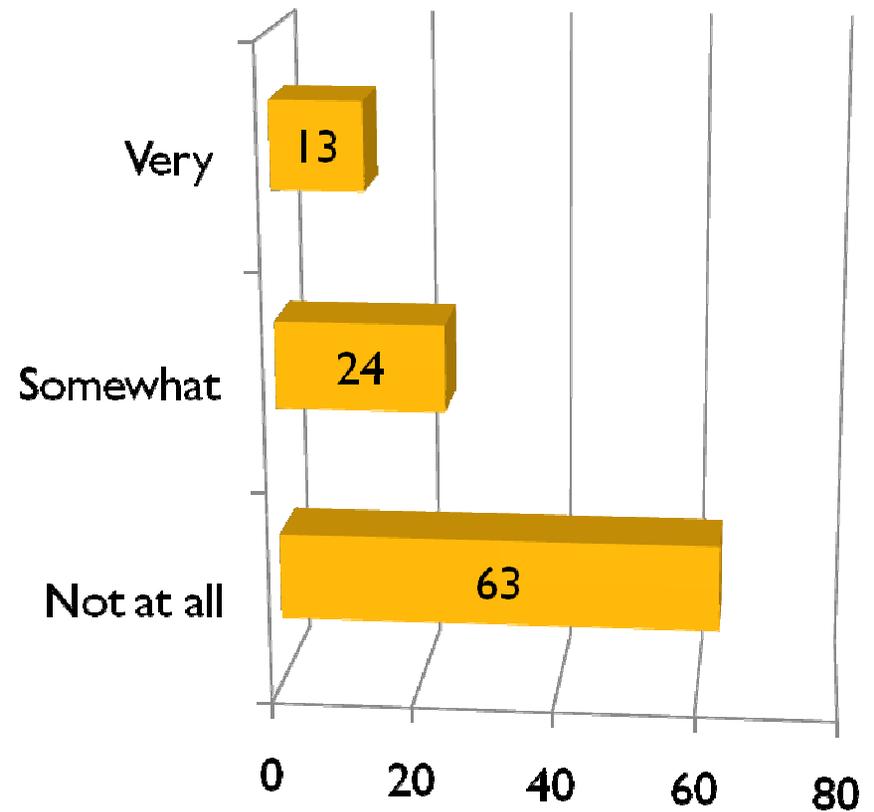
- *“I was mostly just doing research after the occurrence [sic] to find out what I should do. I found mostly female help sites and was turned down by several so I gave up.”*
- *“Aimed almost exclusively at battering and little reference to what I need which is how to approach my wife about getting help”*
- *“Gave me hope and courage to continue to seek help.”*

Qs 5&6: Helpseeking from DV Hotline?

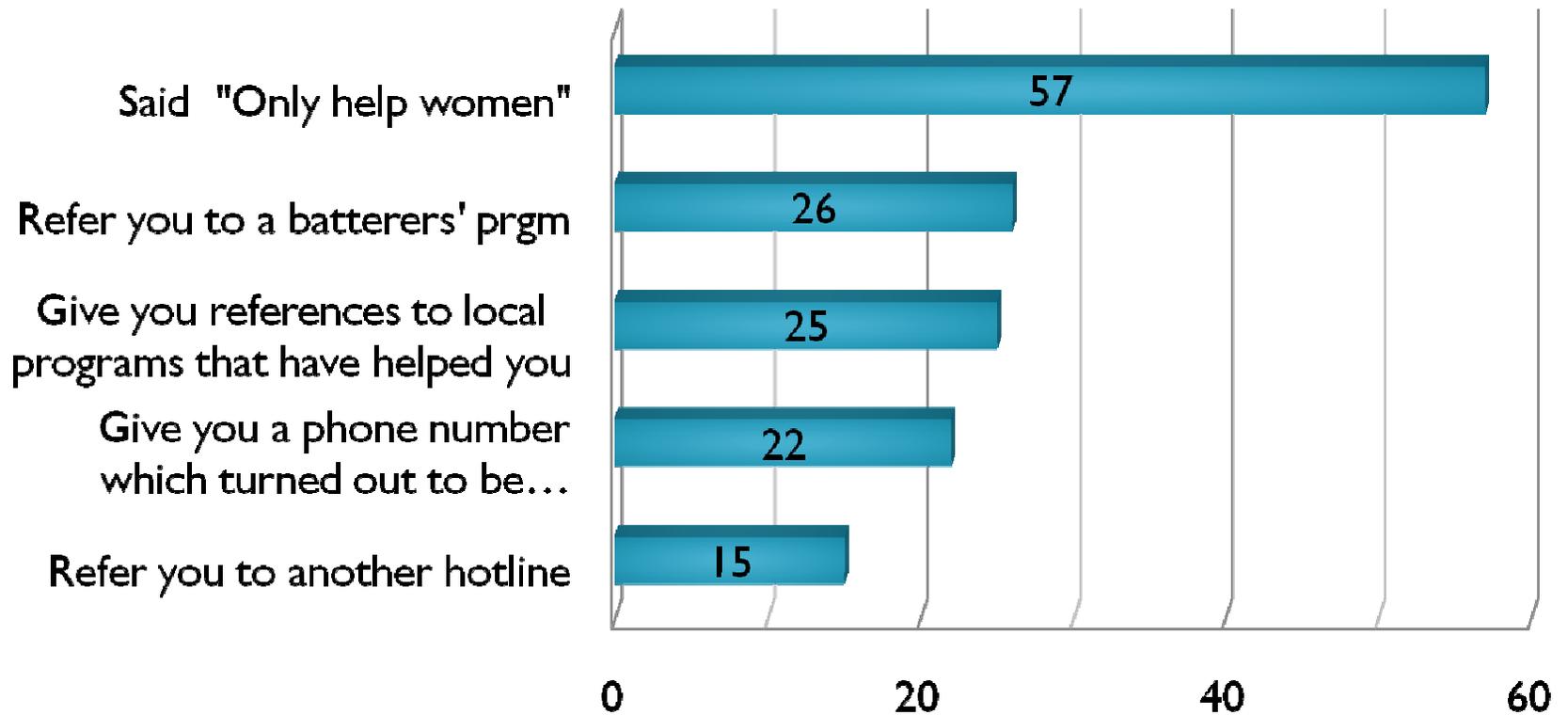
Ever Called a DV Hotline for Victims of Abuse?



How Helpful was Hotline?



Qs 5&6: Experiences with DV Hotline Help



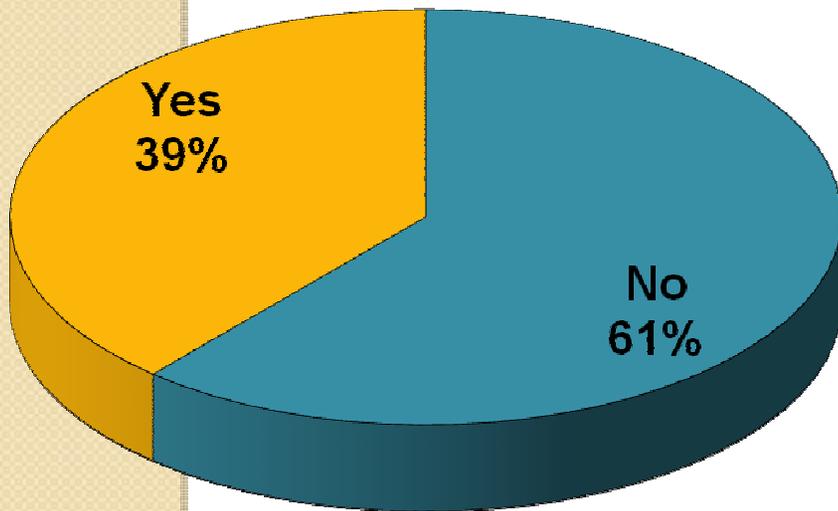


Qs 5&6: Individual Experiences with Hotlines

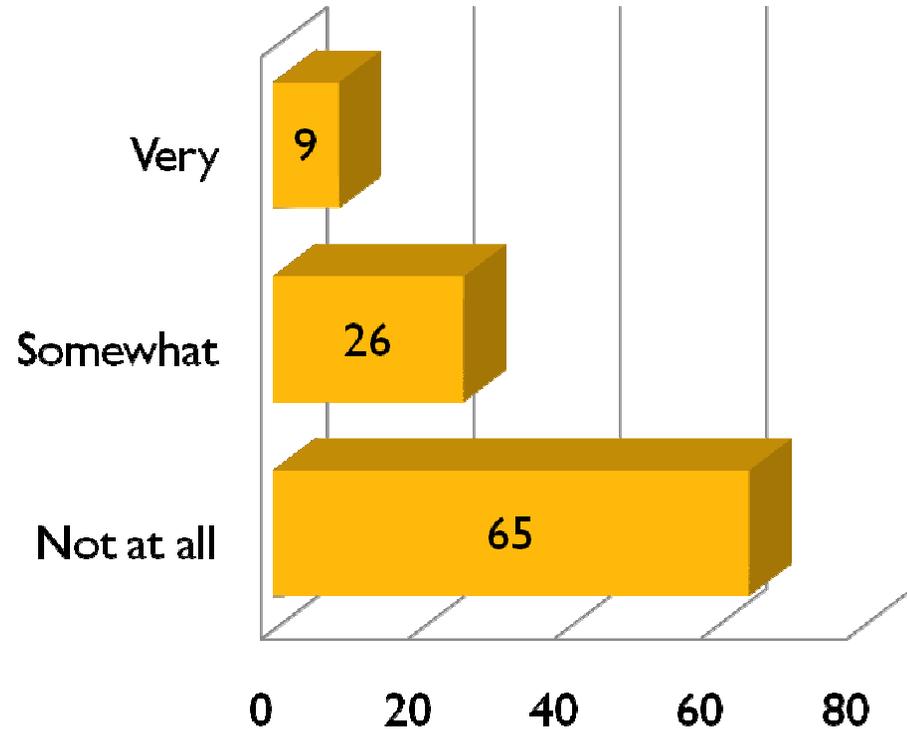
- *“ When I called to explain that I had been hit, they kept misunderstanding me and asking me who I hit. It was frustrating.”*
- *“[T]hey offered to listen if I wanted to recount what had happened [sic], but indicated that no support services were available.”*
- *“Laughed at me and told me I must have done something to deserve it if it happened at all.”*
- *“Told me that women don't commit domestic violence – it must have been my fault.”*

Qs 5&6: Helpseeking from Local DV Agency

Ever Tried to Get Help?



How Helpful was the DV Agency

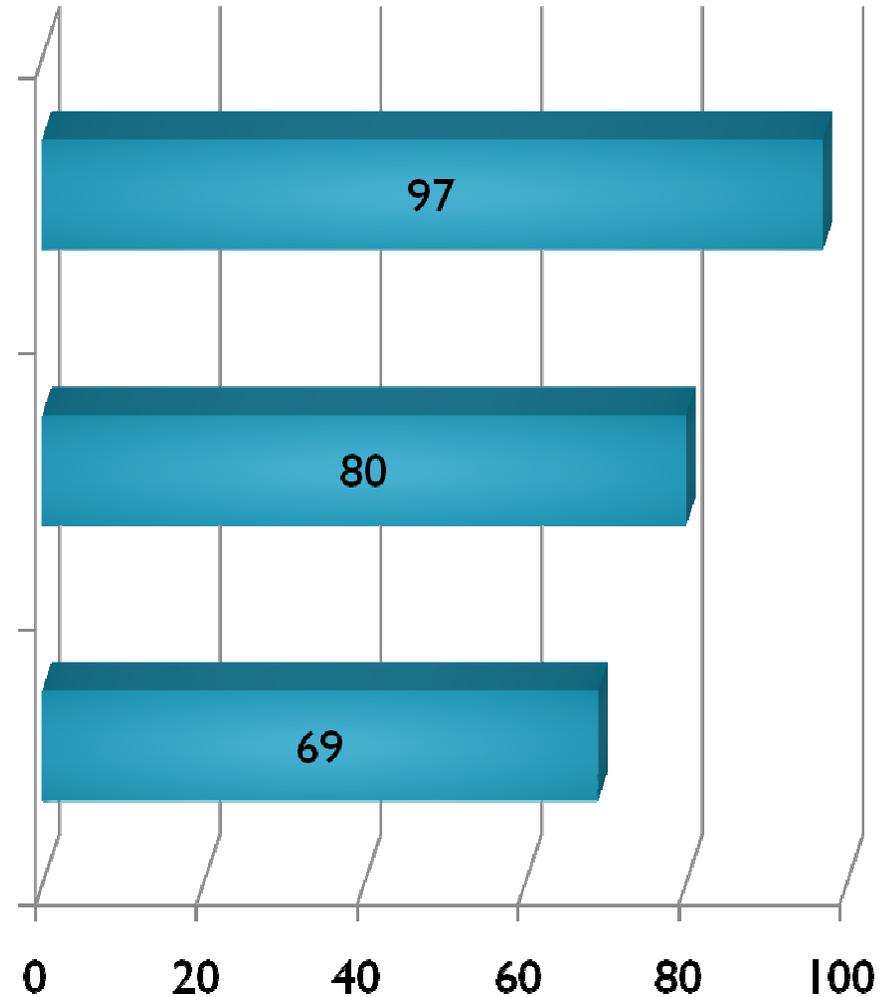


Qs 5&6: Experiences with Local DV Agencies

Gave impression biased against men

Tell you they didn't help male victims

Suggest that you are batterer



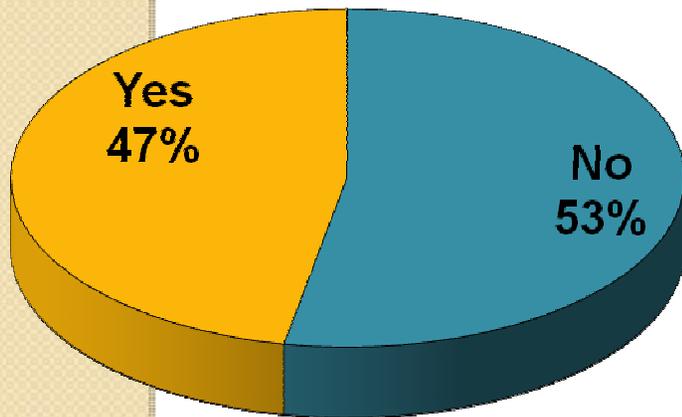


Qs 5&6: Individual Helpseeking Experiences with DV Agencies

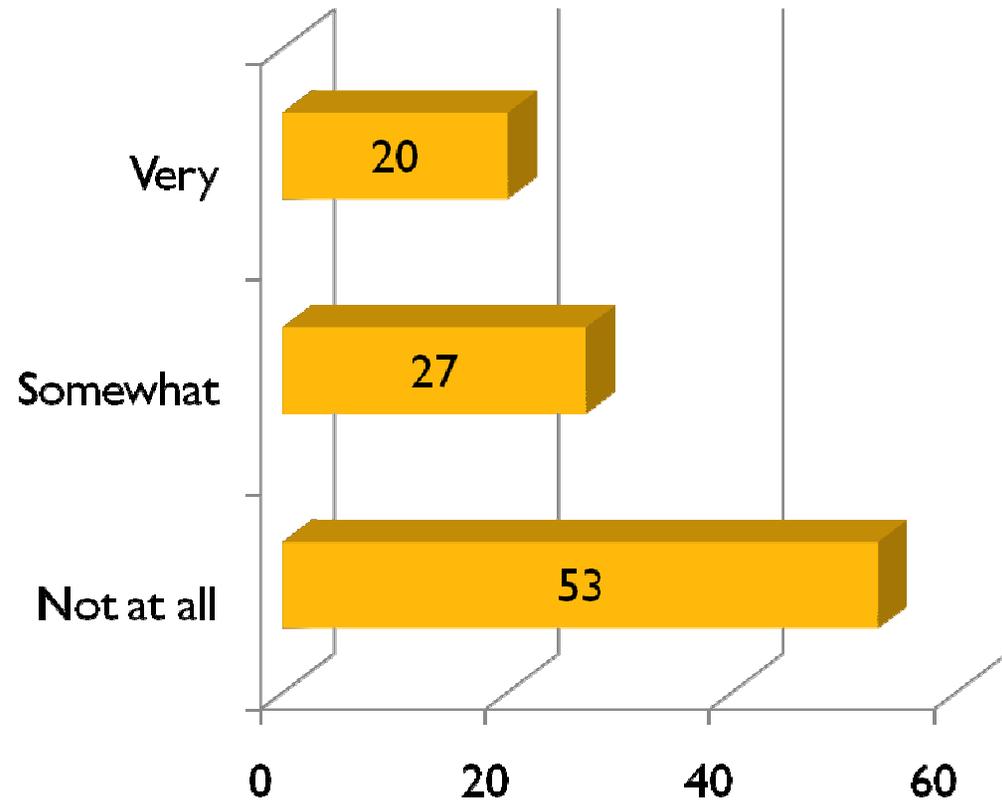
- *“They said there is no funding to help men, only women and children. And no shelter program for men. Suggested that I seek help from family or friends or clergy.”*
- *“They focused only on women victims and men perpetrators. This is a county run program. Their response to me was ‘Which court ordered you to call us?’ I was very distraught and discouraged.”*
- *“My mother is a victim assistant in the DA office, she has found that the XXX system is for women and therefore I have to get any help possible from my mom and dad. I am a police officer and found no support really locally.”*
- *“They didn't really listen to what I said. They assumed that all abusers are men and said that I must accept that I was the abuser. They ridiculed me for not leaving my wife, ignoring the issues about what I would need to do to protect my 6 children and care for them.”*

Qs 5&6: Helpseeking From Police

Did you Ever Seek Help from Police?

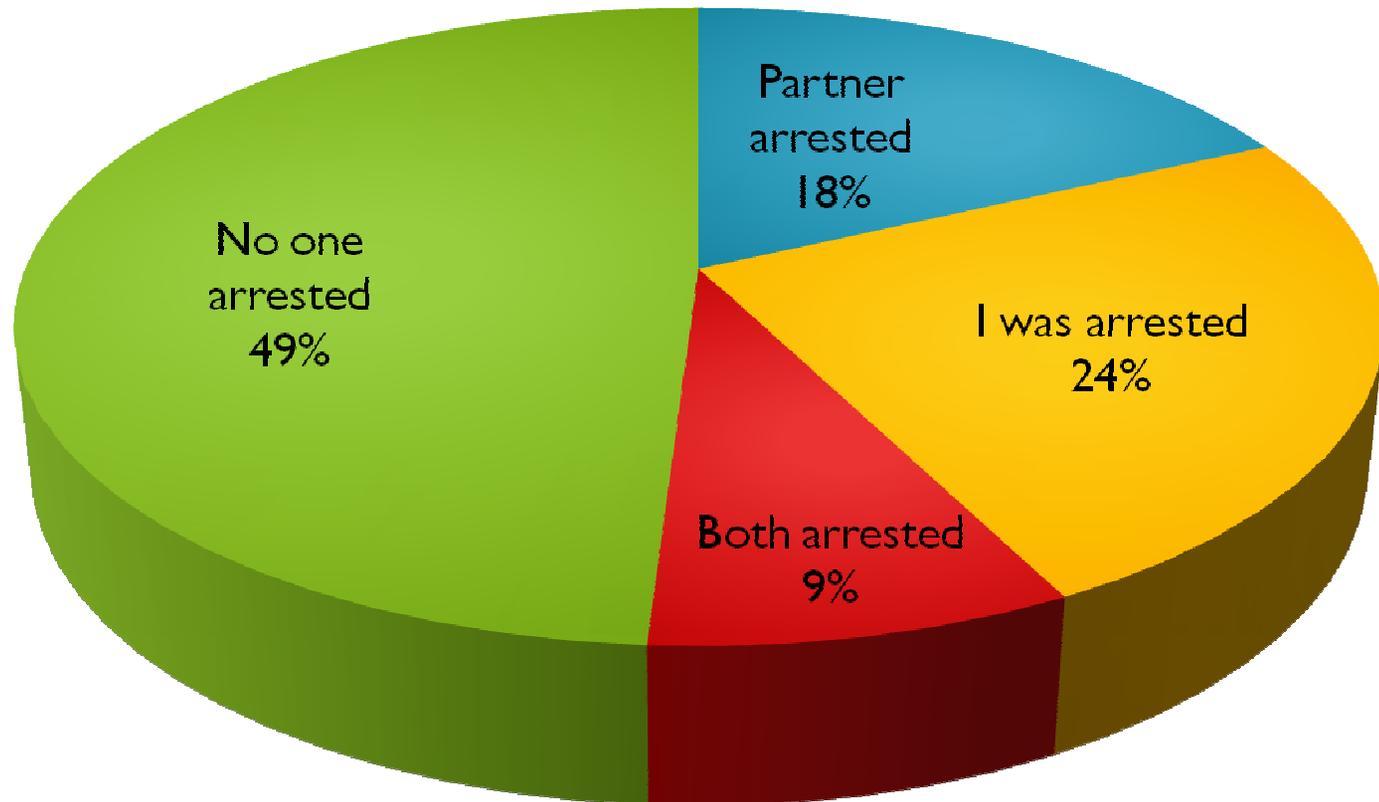


How Helpful were the Police?



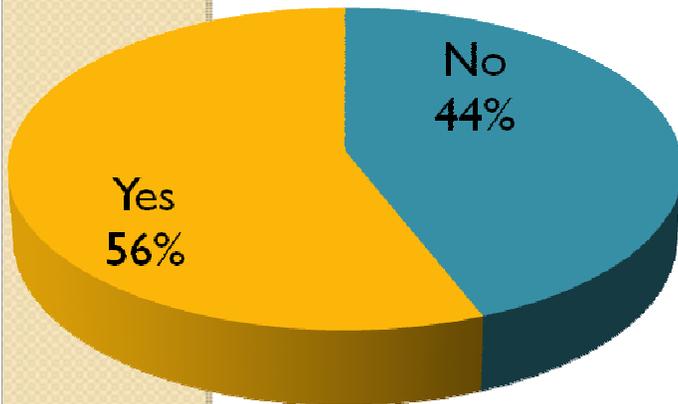
Qs 5&6: Experiences with Helpseeking from Police

Did the Police Arrest Anyone?



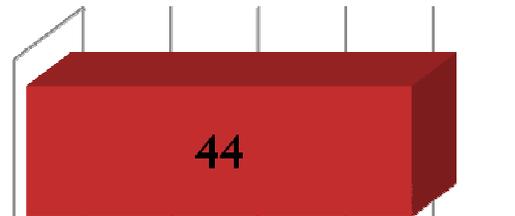
Qs 5&6: Experiences with Helpseeking from Police

Did Police Determine Partner Was Aggressor?



When Partner was Determined as Aggressor...

Ask if you wanted partner arrested



Say was nothing could do and left



Refuse to arrest her?



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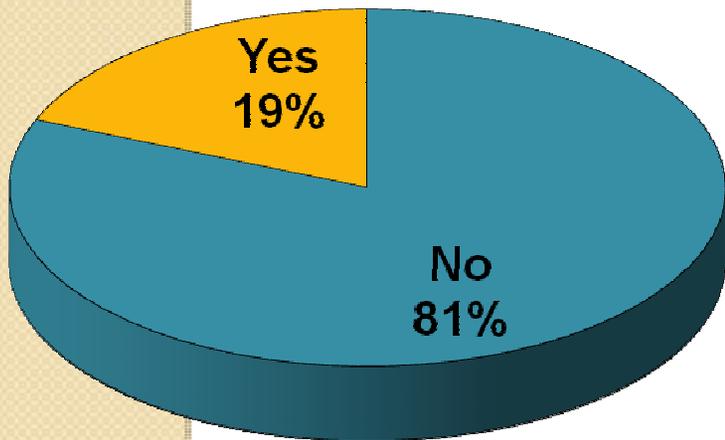


Qs 5&6: Individual Helpseeking Experiences with Police

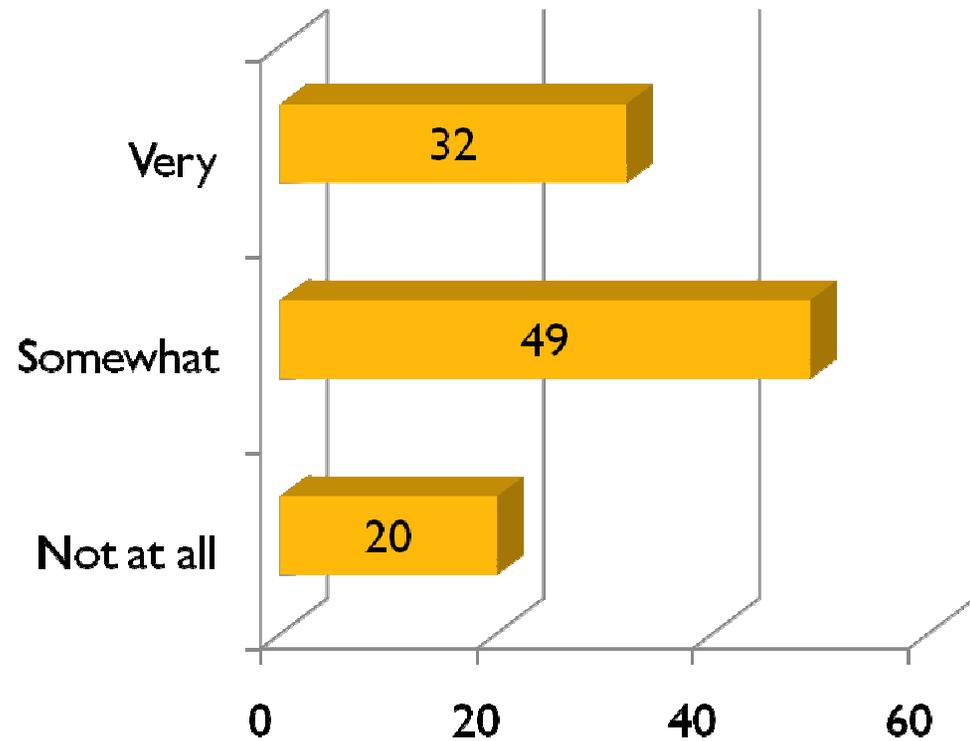
- *“They determined she was the aggressor but said since I was a man it was silly to arrest her. I was appalled.”*
- *“Told me to get her help. Told me to spend the night in a hotel.”*
- *“They saw mw [sic] as a large male and... they immediately took her side. I was at the hospital with bruising and burned eyes from hot coffee thrown in them. They didn't believe that she did this to me and refused to arrest her... The next incident...the police...saw me bleeding they charged her with felony DV but later dropped it to misdemeanor assault because we are not married and do not live together.”*

Qs 5&6: Helpseeking from Medical Professionals

Ever go to Doctor/ER Because Partner Injured You?



How Helpful was the Doctor or Nurse who Treated you?



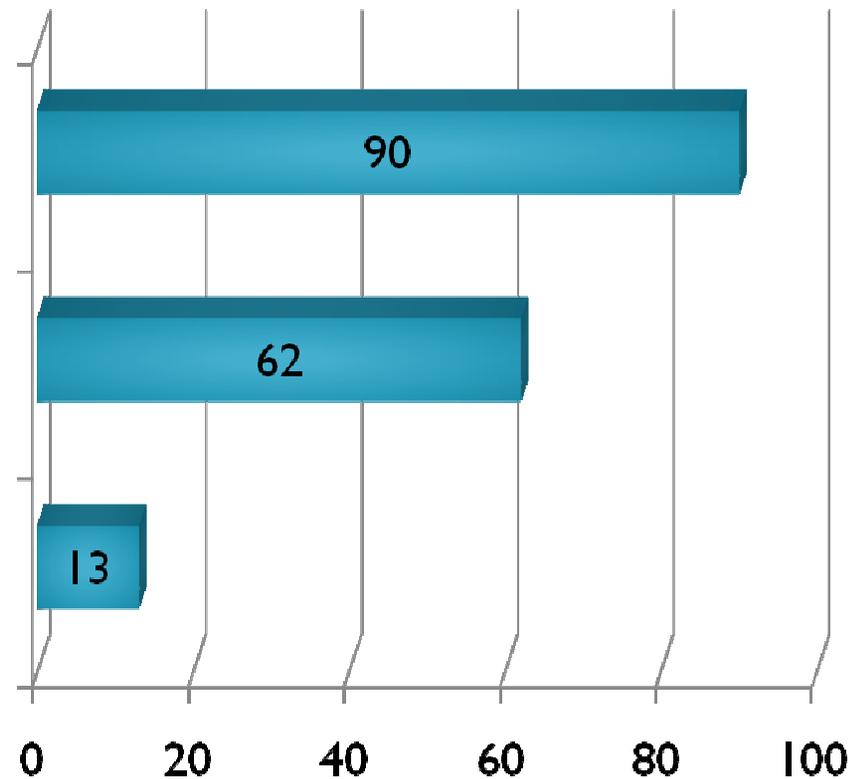
Qs 5&6: Experiences with Medical Providers

Additional Experiences with Helpseeking from Medical Providers

Dr/Nurse asked you how you got injuries

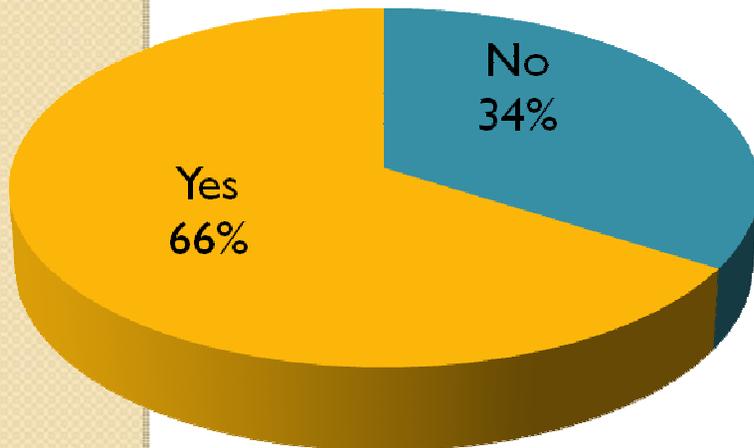
You told the Dr/nurse that partner hurt you

Given info about getting help for DV

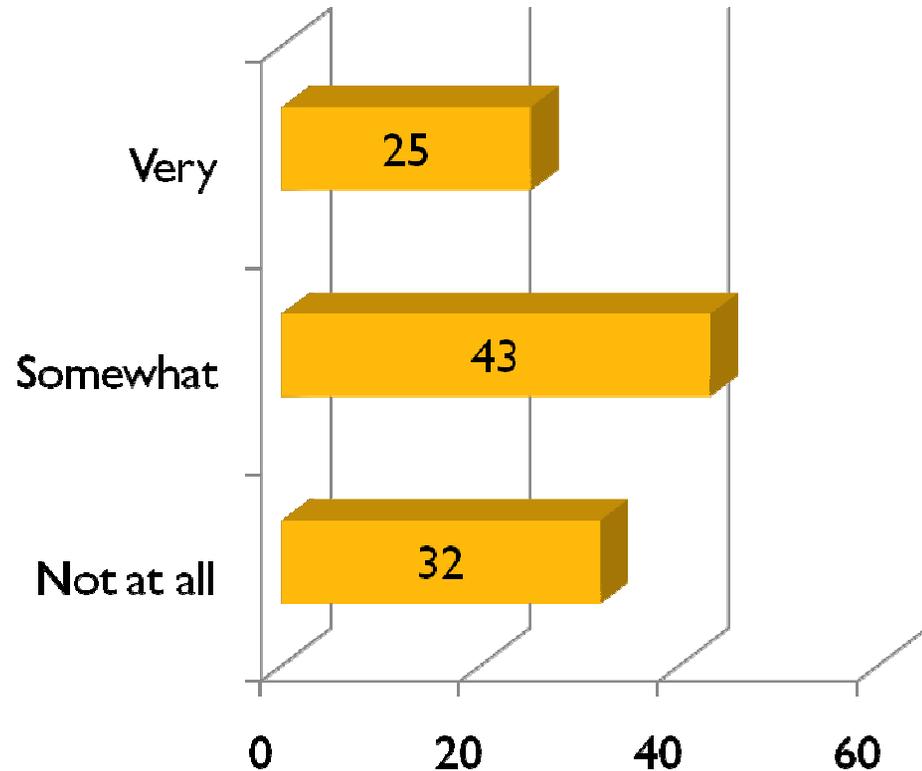


Qs 5&6: Helpseeking from Mental Health Professionals

Ever Sought Help from MH Professional?

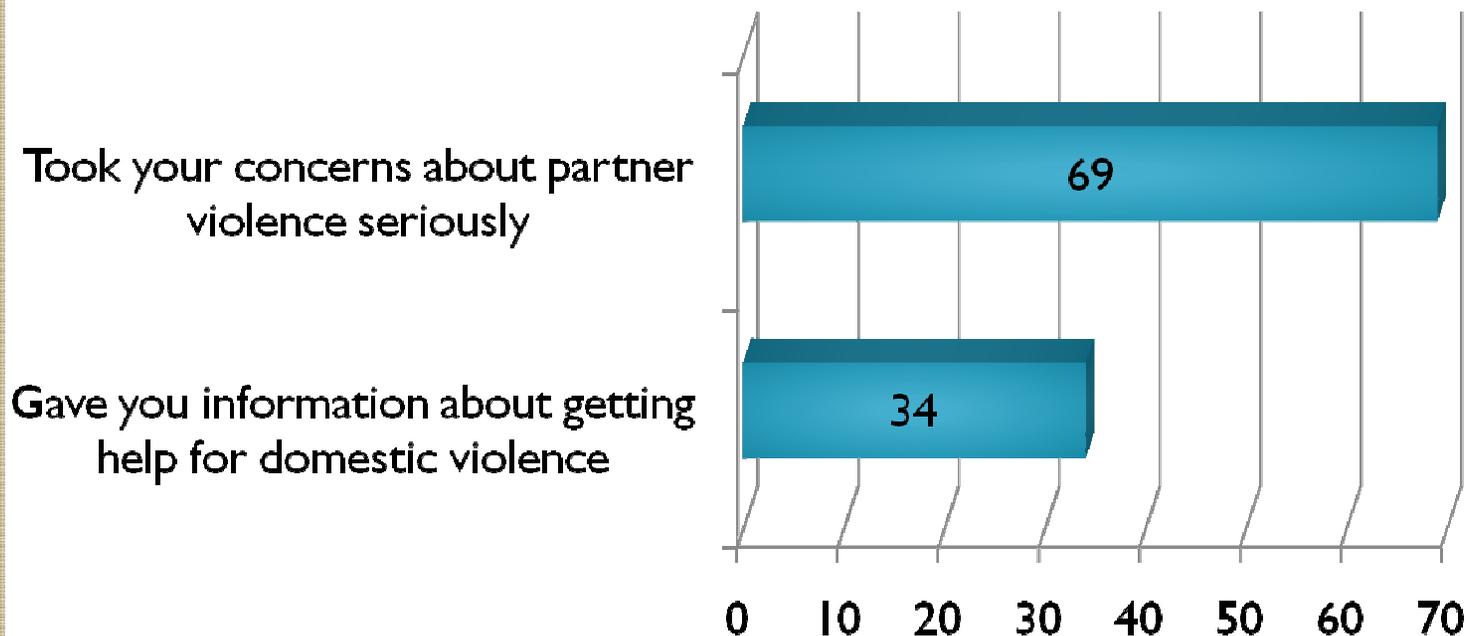


How Helpful was this Experience?



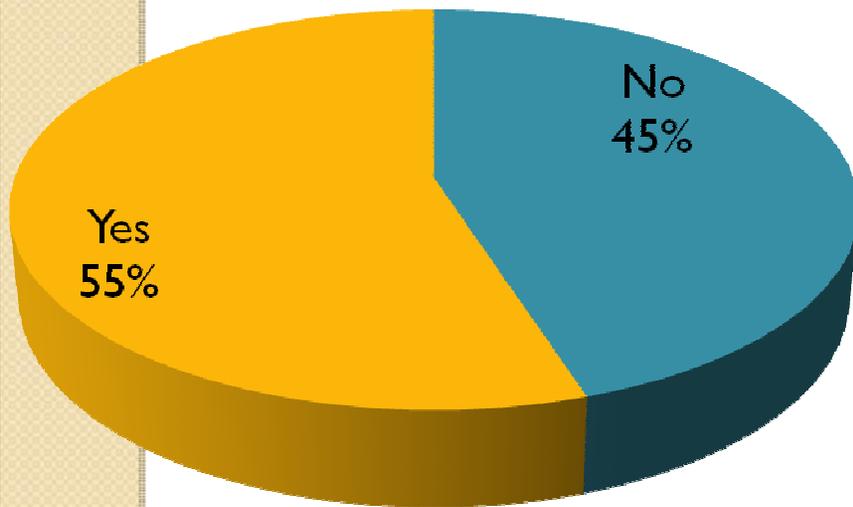
Qs 5&6: Experiences with Mental Health Providers

Additional Experiences with Helpseeking from Mental Health Providers

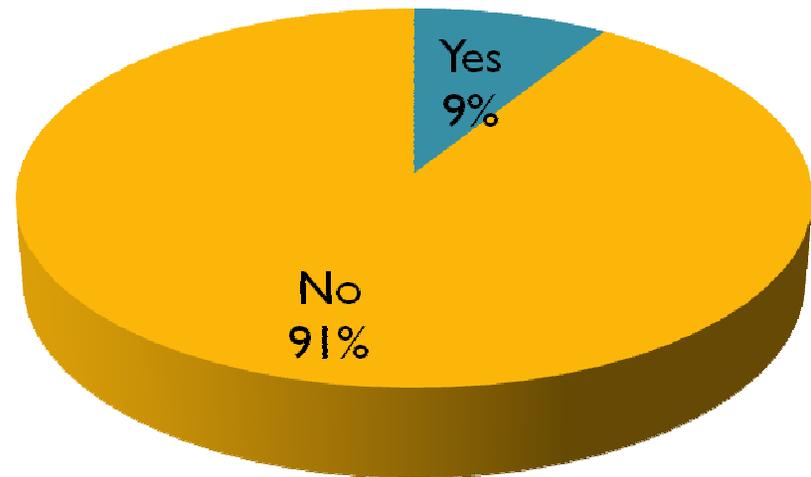


Qs 5&6: Leaving Partner and Services

If you knew there was a safe place you could go to escape your partner's violence, would you go?

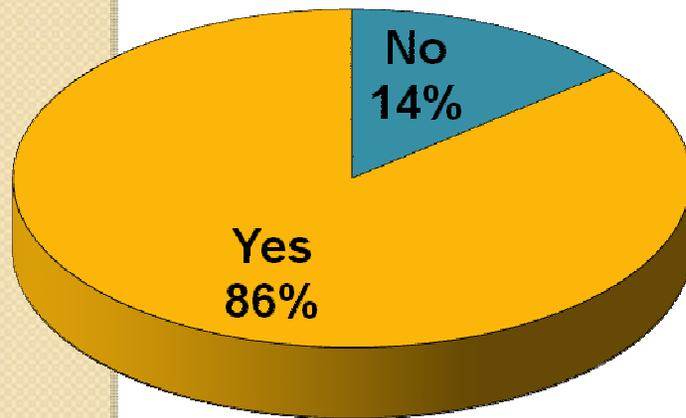


Ever gone to or tried to stay in a shelter for victims of abuse?

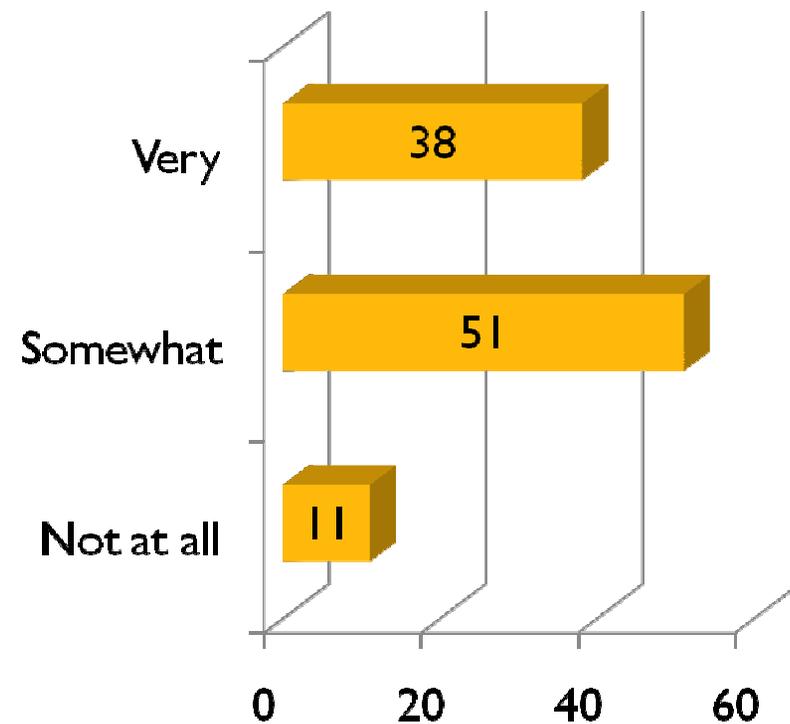


Qs 5&6: Talked with anyone else about partner's violence

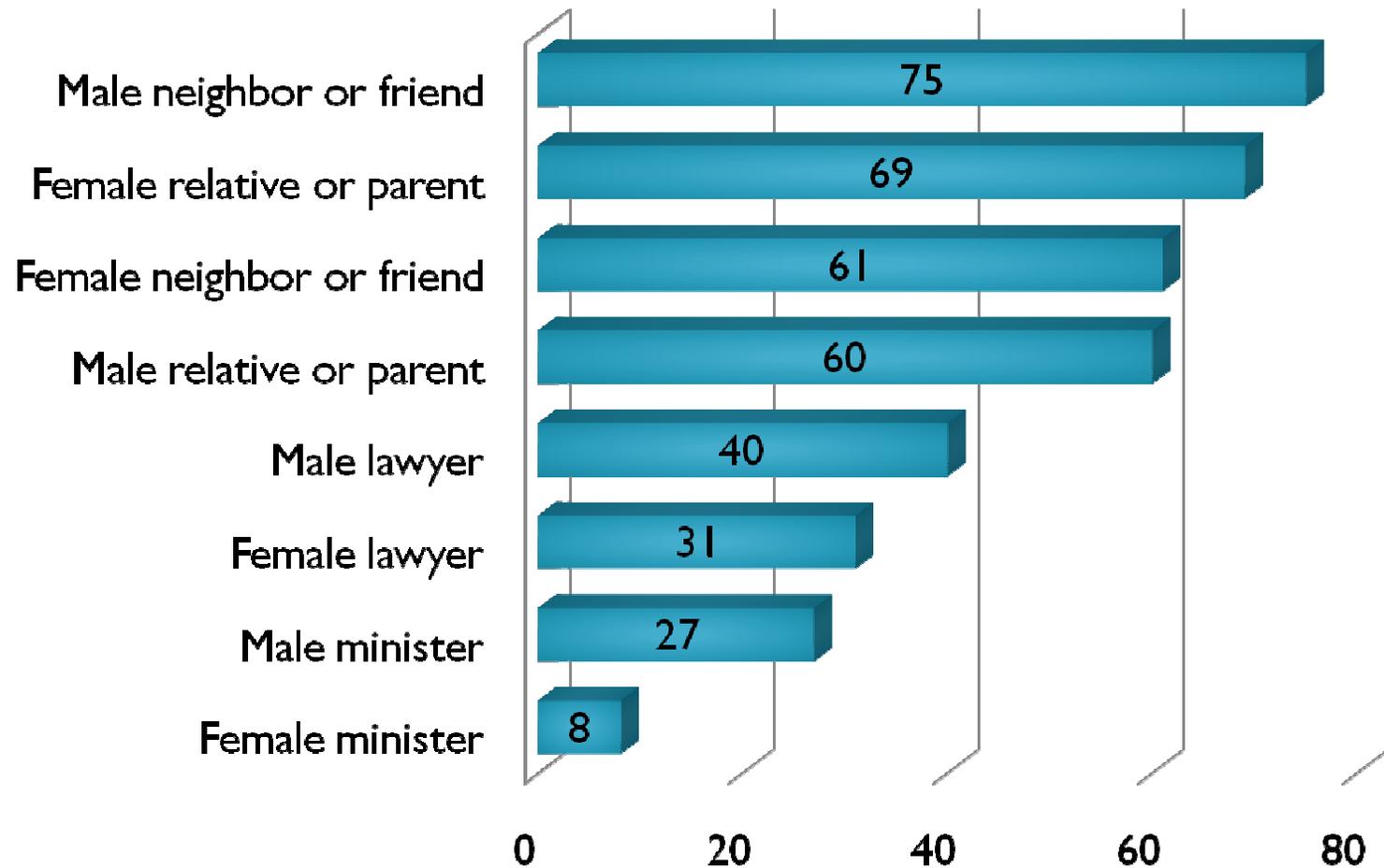
Talked with anyone else about partner's violence?



How Helpful Was This?
(N=188)



Qs 5&6: Experiences with Informal Helpseeking





Qs 5&6: Individual Helpseeking Experiences with Other/Informal Sources

- *“I called my Wifes [sic] sister and asked her to come get Her Sister out of my House. I called My wifes [sic] Best friend in another state and asked for her to come and get My wife help and out of my house. I called my Step mother and cried to her about it all. I called my Cousin and she would hear it over the phone. My Best friend came over and wittnessed [sic] her abuse and behavior”*
- *“Only the two coworkers and I seriously regret talking to the male. He did not help and presumed that he does not have this "problem" because he apparently "handles his woman" better than I "handle" mine. Talking with him cost me my dignity.”*



Conclusions Qs 5&6: Help-seeking

- Most common type of help-seeking: informal sources of support, online, mental health services
 - Also among the most helpful
- Education/information about IPV is not always provided to helpseekers
- Seeking help through the domestic violence service system (i.e., community programs, hotlines, police) was done by 1/3 to 1/2 of men.
 - Not helpful



Conclusions Qs 5&6: Help-seeking

- According to the helpseekers, the traditional domestic violence service system:
 - Say they help only women
 - Were perceived as biased against men
 - Insinuated he was the batterer
 - Arrested him and put him in jail slightly* more often than his partner (*this is not a significant difference)
- Over half of the men say that if had a safe place to go, they would leave.



Results in Total: Implications for Prevention

- Levels of prevention
 - Primary:
 - Prevent something before it occurs, such as through public education or a vaccination
 - Secondary:
 - Early detection, intervention for those at-risk
 - Tertiary:
 - Rehabilitation for those already experiencing the problem (such as substance abuse treatment)



Results in Total: Implications for Prevention

- Findings here emphasize need for prevention on all levels
- Primary prevention:
 - Educate public and providers that both sexes can be IPV victims
- Secondary prevention:
 - First responders should take concerns seriously from all individuals seeking help
 - Police, Hotlines, Medical professionals
- Tertiary prevention:
 - Rehabilitative services available to all individuals
 - DV agencies, MH professionals